Better Homes and Centers

Michigan Department of Social Services

Diversity

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AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT

Sara Clavez, Director
Saginaw Valley Regional 4C

Few child care centers and homes are aware that new federal legislation expanding civil rights protection for individuals with disabilities may effect the way they do business. The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was passed by Congress and signed into law by President Bush in July, 1990. The ADA guarantees equal opportunity in public accommodations, transportation and employment to individuals with disabilities.

Individuals with disabilities are defined in the ADA as those who have a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more of the individual's major life activities, or have a record of having such an impairment. An individual who is believed to have a major impairment, even though not actually impaired, is also protected under the law. This last category might include an individual who has had a disfiguring accident but is not actually impaired.

Many centers and homes may be effected by the public accommodations provisions of the law which deal with the accessibility of a business or service to customers. Child care centers are listed in the law as one of the "public accommodations" that cannot deny the opportunity to benefit from its service based on the disability of an individual. The law also specifically refers to "child care centers" operating in a home during the day where the same house is used for residential purposes only at night. It is still unclear whether this will be interpreted to include family and group child day care homes.

(Continued on page 2)

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

We frequently talk about a partnership between providers and the Department to protect young children in child care settings. One area that has not been discussed enough is the reason for having promulgated child care rules. These rules represent minimal requirements which provide for the basic protection of children as well as environments which stimulate child growth and development. They are developed with considerable discussion among parents, providers, DSS staff, child care advocacy groups, and private and public agency personnel. They represent guidelines for providers which can help to create safe and positive daily experiences for children in care. With a subject as complex as this, 100% agreement will never occur. The rules do, however, reflect a significant majority of interests and take into consideration the notion of compromise without placing children at risk.

Many of you far exceed the rule requirements and are to be commended for your desire for excellence. You have told me that I can come and visit your program any time without prior notice. You have said with pride that you do not do anything differently when I or one of my staff visit your program. Others of you, however, see the rules as something to be met only when the licensing consultant is visiting. Your perception of the rules is that they are intrusive and interfere with your operation.

Compliance with child care rules should be an everyday effort, not just something done occasionally to please the State. It ensures that the needs of the children are met and meets the expectations of parents that their children are protected. Complaints, as well as child and staff turnover will be reduced. Parents

(Continued on page 2)

AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT
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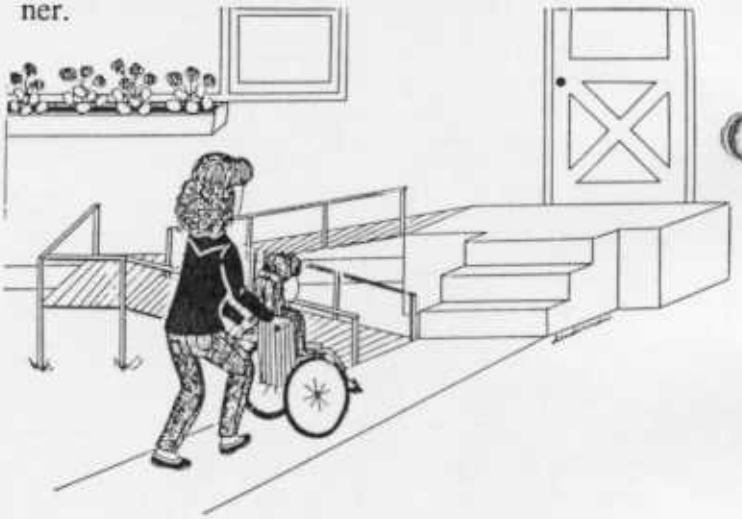
Individuals who operate a child care program are urged not to panic. There are also protections for businesses in the law. A child care facility will be required to make reasonable accommodations and to make readily achievable changes to make the facility more accessible and to enable the person with disabilities to benefit from the service. A child care facility is **not** required to make fundamental alterations in the program nor to make changes that would be an undue burden on the program. In other words, more accommodations will be expected of larger, better funded programs.

Child care facilities will still be able to set up eligibility criteria to assure safe operation of the program. These criteria must be based on actual risk and applied to all applicants. A program must set behavioral standards for enrollment or termination rather than excluding on the basis of a diagnosis.

As in any situation where it may become necessary to provide a good faith effort to comply with the law, it is wise to keep written records. Center directors and child care home operators may want to keep a log of what they have done to make their service more accessible and responsive to children with special needs. Such a log might include workshops taken to learn more about the law and about accommodating programs to special needs, modifications made to entrances or bathrooms, toys and games purchased to meet the special needs of a child, changes in schedules or program policies. If offers to make adjustments are made to parents and refused, they should also be logged.

It may be much easier than we think to accommodate children with disabilities. In a survey of New York state child care providers, two thirds of those accepting children with special needs said that staff supervision time for these children was the same as or only a little more than for other children. Technical assistance may be available through local 4C agencies and Intermediate School Districts/Regional Educational Service Centers.

Including children with disabilities is not only possible, it is desirable. The obvious benefit is to the child with disabilities who has a better chance for normal friendships with peers. The child's family also benefits by receiving needed respite or the opportunity for employment while their child is in care. The surprise is that all children benefit when children with disabilities are included. Adults become more aware of the unique needs of each child and begin to think more flexibly about the program. Children become more sympathetic and helpful toward others. The ADA presents challenges but everyone can be a winner.



DIRECTOR'S CORNER *(Continued)*

and staff are this Division's primary source of complaints. They generally wish to remain anonymous for obvious reasons but their concerns usually represent areas of rule noncompliance.

I would encourage all of you to look at child care rules not in terms of keeping licensing staff happy on the day they are conducting an investigation, but rather to view them as representing a framework for quality child care.

If you, as the licensee, establish an expectation that the rules be followed and if you model support for the rules as being good for children, your staff will follow your lead. Discuss the rules with your staff in the context of their value to children. Help staff understand their responsibilities to maintain compliance with the rules. The results will help to eliminate conflict with the Department and strengthen the quality of care.

Ted deWolf, Director
Div. of Child Day Care Licensing

MAINSTREAMING CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES IN A CHILD CARE CENTER

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Easter Seal Society of Michigan, Inc.
Grand Rapids

Parents of a child with a disability need options when choosing a child care environment that best fits their family situation. As child care providers, we have the responsibility to provide parents of special needs children those options.

With the passage of the Americans With Disabilities Act, our child care sites should be designed to facilitate special needs employees and to mainstream all children, regardless of their special needs. This is not to say that all programs would be suitable for every child, but all programs should be willing and able to accept some children with disabilities of varying degrees, whether speech, hearing, or motor delays, or a broad spectrum of neurological or physical disabilities.

Will your center or home need to change to accept special needs children? Some special needs children, such as those with speech or hearing impairments, Downs Syndrome, mild physical disorders, or developmental delays may not require any structural adjustments at your facility. However, special consideration must be given to several areas before accepting children with more involved needs to make the experience positive from the beginning, for both the chid and your staff.

Many children with Cerebral Palsy or Spina Bifida, for example, will use wheelchairs. Will your existing entrance accommodate a child's wheelchair or walker? Of course, a level entrance is best, but the addition of a ramp may work fine.

Inside, are your play areas open enough for a child in a wheelchair to enjoy each area? Possibly a new arrangement of existing furnishings could provide a more open design. You may need to adjust the height of one of your child-size tables to be used by a child in a wheelchair, so that activities and manipulatives can be worked comfortably with the child's knees under the tables, and body close to the work surface.

With an adult nearby, many non-walking children maintain enough balance to sit in a chair. Devices that tie on to a chair can aid a child with support. The child's parents may be able to bring equipment helpful in the care of their child, such as a feeder seat.

Volunteers can be a great help during meals, especially if you have children that need to be fed. If the children can grasp and eat table food, allow them to do as much as possible themselves. Be sure you understand the children's dietary needs. Most of the time they enjoy feeding themselves.

Art activities are such a thrill for any child who has never finger painted (the table surfaces works great!) with paint or pudding. You may find some special needs children have tactile problems and a little encouragement goes a long way. Here at Friends That Care, we have children who could not tolerate touching paint or glue, and are now enjoying art time. Just offer enough aid to get the project underway, without worrying about the finished product. Remember, the value lies in allowing all children to be creative during the experience. Extra adult hands for projects help, and you may want to do more one-on-one projects while others are involved in different activities.

Many non-walking children are very mobile on the floor, either by scooting or crawling, and this should not pose a problem in any existing child care facility. Be sure to arrange toys on low levels, where crawlers can reach and enjoy toys and other play things. Floor play is more important to these children, and play sets and manipulatives appropriate to the child's developmental stage can be enjoyed by a child who can sit or play on the floor.

Bathrooms do need adjustments to be easily used by special needs children. Sinks that have no cabinets or legs allow children in chairs to use the sink by themselves. This is a thrill for children who cannot do this in their own homes. You may just find you have to make time for water play each day! Instead of traditional chest-high changing tables, a low cot makes changing preschoolers easy and safe.

(Continued on page 10)

DISCIPLINE PRACTICES: THE INFLUENCE OF CULTURE

Barbara Taylor
Central Michigan AEYC
Conference Chairperson
and MOYC Co-chair

Central Michigan AEYC members, family day care providers and child care providers and child care center staff met on December 3rd for a fascinating workshop panel discussion about the influence of culture on discipline practices. After an overview of development as it relates to discipline by Marcia Rystak, Laura Stein moderated a panel discussion with Juanita Castilla-Corr, Pamela Eaton-Champion and Pam Dunham. Members of the panel discussed these guidance and discipline techniques from three different cultural perspectives, Mexican-American, African-American and American Indian.

Juanita summarized some basic child rearing practices and the implications they had for child care staff who were working with children raised in a Mexican-American culture. Adults working with Mexican-American children should be aware of and sensitive to the child's background. Whereas teachers are taught to get down on the child's level and establish eye contact, Mexican-American children are taught that it is disrespectful to look at the person who is disciplining them. Expect these youngsters to look down and to avoid eye contact.

Mexican-American children are very family oriented. They are raised to believe that families take care of one another. Children are very close to their parents and may have an especially difficult time separating in the morning. They may cry for hours–day after day. Caregivers who understand this attachment are more sensitive to the needs and difficulties of these children. For these children, families come first, and only afterward, do they think about themselves. Everyone has a responsibility to the extended family. If someone succeeds in life, they then go back to help other family members. This is useful information as family roles and family themes are introduced in the classroom.

In Mexico, many families grow up in close living quarters. Children may sleep together in the same cot or beds at home. Staff who are aware of this will not be surprised when a child attempts to crawl onto another child's cot.

Mexican-American children are raised to be very passive. Any attempts to develop assertiveness may be resisted by children and their parents. Staff must be aware of this and proceed carefully.

Male and female roles are very traditional in this culture. The male is the breadwinner and the female stays at home. Staff who are aware of this are better able to respond to the parent who may discipline a child who takes on a non-traditional role in dress up or dramatic play.

Pam Eaton-Champion, in explaining how African-American cultures differ from Anglo-American cultures, was careful to point out that not all blacks will share the same perspective. Differences in economics, education, and social classes all influence the way African-Americans raise their children. She indicated that it was her personal point of view that she was sharing.

Black children are raised to believe that they have to be twice as good to get a job, to get on the team or to get ahead in life. Children learn to compete and parents encourage this competition early in a child's life. Although cooperation is still encouraged in some situations, they believe that "going with the flow" isn't enough. They learn they have to "swim upstream." Caregivers who work on cooperation and prosocial skill and who minimize competition may find themselves in conflict with the values of the families they serve.

Throughout history and the civil rights movements, black women have been noted for their strength. Therefore, they raise their daughters to be strong. This strength and assertiveness is valued in the home and caregivers may be asked to help develop and strongly encourage this in female children.

The black church is very strong and influential. In the church setting, children are expected to sit still and remain quiet for long periods of time. As a result of these experiences, children are able to sit through circle time for longer periods of time than other children. Caregivers or teachers who are raised in this culture may choose to plan longer group times and find that black American children often have no difficulty paying attention.

Based on different values, time, money, etc., discipline techniques vary. A child who throws sand in the hair of another child may be strongly disciplined because of the time a parent will spend taking out the hair, cleaning it, and rebraiding it. To anyone raised in an Anglo-American culture this behavior may have been inappropriate but trivial. To the black American family it is very inappropriate and would merit strong discipline.

Although black American children are raised to look you in the eye when you discipline them, there are

some things that a child will not say back to you out of respect. Therefore, they may be reluctant to "use their words" and be as open and assertive as we would like them to be.

Pam Dunham, in talking about the American Indian culture began by exploring the issue of eye contact. The degree of eye contact American Indian children will make and how comfortable they are with the people they interact with varies. Discipline is always handled privately and in a personal setting. There is a large pool of adults that the child responds to and any of these adults may assume responsibility for discipline. American Indian children are very uncomfortable if discipline is public. Caregivers know that discipline is more effective when they establish a good rapport with the child. It is also extremely important to discipline American Indian children in private.

In this culture individuals are respected more as they get older. Children look to their elders for guidance. Everyone else is equal and everyone works cooperatively. Everyone's viewpoint is respected...a two-year-old as well as a twenty-year-old. Children who are raised in this culture may have a difficult time adjusting to an authoritarian classroom.

American Indian children cooperate and collaborate for the team. They lose the respect of others if they are seen as the "shining star." These children do not want to be the center of attention. They gain respect by helping others and becoming a part of the community. They are uncomfortable with individual praise. They want the whole team/community to be rewarded. Caregivers need to give thought to when it is appropriate to spotlight these children and how to administer praise.

American Indian families try to help their children develop self-esteem and inner control at an early age. They help children find a balance in their physical, social, intellectual and spiritual selves. This is consistent with most appropriate early childhood practices.

Humor is often used to redirect American Indian children. Adults often redirect a child's behavior by turning it back to the child to have him come up with the alternative behavior. For example, instead of saying "Come back to the group," a child would respond better to "Where should you be?" The children want to make their own choices. Instead of saying "Wear your boots," the teacher might prompt, "It's cold and slushy outside," may be just what American Indian children need to hear to problem-solve and take care of themselves.

American Indian children often sit back and watch until they feel comfortable and then they will dive into new situations. Staff must be careful not to push children into a new learning center or game. They should take their cues from the child and proceed when the child is ready. In some situations a caregiver may feel a need to walk through the situation with the child and focus on how to make a child more comfortable.

In summarizing the discussion to determine how to respond to different cultures within the classroom, the panelists made the following recommendations.

1. *Treat all children as individuals. Be sensitive to each child's culture. If you're not sure what that is, ask parents and family members.*

2. *Be careful not to impose your own cultural values on others.*

3. *Try to balance your approach. Given the mix of values and cultures in many classrooms, some children will be uncomfortable with your approach. Be sensitive to these children whenever possible but also recognize that in the real world, children are faced with different expectations and may have to conform to new ways.*

4. *Respect all children and know that many of their actions are culturally based. Acknowledging a child's emotions is an important part of understanding his perspective.*

5. *Recognize that there are still more similarities than there are differences in discipline practices across cultures. Basic discipline practices usually work.*

6. *Because our world is so diverse, we as educators must take time to learn about different cultures and teach these differences to children. Whether you agree or disagree with the beliefs of other cultures, we all need to respect each culture's beliefs. A resource to help you achieve this goal is CULTURE IN THE CLASSROOM, National Clearinghouse for Bilingual Education, Washington D.C. 1-800-321-NCBE.*

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INTRODUCING CHILDREN TO NATIVE AMERICANS

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In this Quincentenary Year, the 500th anniversary of the "discovery of America" by Columbus, much is being done to celebrate the rich ethnic diversity of American culture. Many of you may be planning activities to introduce children to new cultural experiences or to celebrate each child's unique heritage. If so, you are likely to be focusing on the "specialness" of the culture of child, highlighting those characteristics that make it unlike any other. You may be planning activities to expose the children to the foods of different cultures; to the sounds of different languages; to the stories, music, dances and games that are part of that way of life; to the ways that homes vary across the world; to the plant and animal life of different regions; and so on. Such activities can be exciting to plan and fun for everyone.

Some of you may also be thinking about the contributions of the Native Americans who occupied this continent long before any European stepped foot upon it and who continue to make their homes within it. If so, I hope that you are planning to celebrate the uniqueness of distinct native cultures, rather than promoting stereotypes. When we gloss all Native American cultures under one broad label —"Indians"— we do each an injustice. The Navajo with whom I live and work are as culturally different from their immediate neighbors, the Hopi, as the English are from the French. They are even less like native peoples living in Washington or Michigan, where environmental conditions are so vastly different. Each native culture has its own language, customs, and way of life.

Avoiding stereotypes when you teach children about Native Americans is actually quite easy. You simply need to do a little background research, and then focus on one or two distinct groups rather than subsuming all of the cultures under a single label. Let me use the Navajo as an example.

Who are the Navajo?

The Navajo moved into the southwest about 500 years ago, gradually occupying lands that were formerly the homelands of the Anasazi, the people the Navajo call the "Ancient Ones". Navajoland traditionally falls within space defined by four major mountain peaks; one to the east, the south, the west, and the north. Each is associated with a different color-- white, blue, yellow, and black--as well as with a different previous stone-white shell, turquoise, abalone, and jet. The Navajo Nation's political boundaries overlap four states and encompass an area about the size of West Virginia. Population is approximately 180,000.

Stories of origin, told by "singers" or medicinemen, speak of this world as the "Fifth World", with previous worlds inhabited by plants and animals, as well as Holy People, but only this one containing humans as caretakers. During the winter months, between the first killing frost of fall and the first thunderstorm of spring, elders share stories with their children and grandchildren about Ma'ii, the clever Coyote whose antics serve to explain or teach lessons.

Originally a nomadic people, the Navajo adopted sheep from their Pueblo neighbors and in the process became the only Native American culture with a pastoral (herding) life-style. Sheep became their life. Since vegetation is so sparse, however, they remained a semi-nomadic people, moving between camps on a seasonal basis. There was a spring lambing camp, a summer camp with temporary shelter in the higher and cooler elevations, and a winter camp, well-sheltered from the weather. Often there was a second summer camp, near a water supply, where corn and other crops were grown, harvested, and dried for winter use. In a land where wood is scarce, homes--hogans--were small and circular in form, with a doorway to the east to greet the morning sun. Often these bowl-like structures were covered in adobe mud, as protection from the weather. Women became weavers of fine blankets (unlike the Hopi, where men are weavers); men became silversmiths and created finely crafted silver and turquoise jewelry.

The culture emphasizes a concept called ***hozho***, which translated means something like "balance and harmony in all things". Family ties are important, as are clan ties; that is, the kinship group **into** which you were born (your mother's clan) as well as the one **for** which you were born (your father's clan). Residence clusters are widely scattered in a landscape where grazing land is sparse, and clusters usually consist of several homes, each occupied by a "family", and all typically linked through the mother's clan.

Today's families may live in modern homes, with electricity and running water, televisions and VCRs. They may dress much like other Americans, drive

trucks, go to schools, and hold jobs. But modern Navajo life retains many elements of the traditional life-style. Sheepherding is still common. Families still live in kin-based groupings. Ceremonial life remains important.

How can I introduce young children to the Navajo?

1. *Help children get a "feel" for the Navajo native environment: (a) Make cactus gardens in sand. (b) Plant a yucca and watch it grow; taste the ripe "banana Fruit" of the Yucca. (c) Collect pine cones and find the seeds in them. Pinyon trees are a kind of pine. Buy pinyon seeds (pine nuts), unshelled or shelled, and taste these. The shelled versions must have their shells removed first! (d) Make "smelly boxes" using cedar pine, and sage. (e) Collect pieces of sandstone rock, and show children how the grains can be rubbed off. Fill baby food jars with layers of different colors of sand.*

2. *Take children to a farm (or petting zoo) to see sheep and goats, lambs and kids. Let them touch the animals, feel their wool, smell them, feed them. If possible, observe the shearing process, and bring raw wool back to the classroom for further activities.*

3. *Process raw wool for weaving or other crafts. Clean the wool by washing it in cool soapy water and then rinse fully. Card it, using special "combs" for this purpose, to remove tangles and things caught in it. Have someone demonstrate how to spin the wood into yarn with a drop spindle or let children stretch bunches of carded wool into long tubes and then roll it between palm and thigh so that it forms yarn (typically rather thick and bunchy). Dye the yarn, if desire, using dyes made of natural materials such as onion skins, bark, walnut shells, or leaves. Use the wool yarn to weave on simple looms, or for other crafts. Compare and contrast homemade yarns with those in stores, knitted into sweaters, made into blankets, and so on.*

4. *Make traditional Navajo foods and taste them. Examples include* ***steamed corn*** *(cooked with husks on it a 'pit oven' in the ground, on top of coals and covered with wet corn husks);* ***kneel-down bread*** *(made of young, fresh corn, grated onto corn husks which are then folded into a package around it and baked either in a pit oven, as above, or in the oven);* ***mutton stew*** *(a soup made with chunks of lamb, onion, potatoes and carrots, seasoned to taste);* ***fry bread*** *(a flat puffed bread made from a dough consisting of flour, baking powder, a touch of salt and warm water. Pieces of the dough are patted into a pancake shape and either flapped back and forth between the palms to make it thin and smooth or--the easy way--rolled flat with a rolling pin, and then fried in fat.* ***Tortillas*** *are made with the same dough, but are cooked on a lightly greased griddle or on a grill outdoors.*

5. *Tell Ma'ii (Coyote) stories to children. Traditionally told during the winter months, children find Ma'ii (pronounced Mah-ee) a beguiling creature. He is clever, often naughty, and very impetuous. The stories about him are quite funny, and they are used to teach lessons or explain why things are the way they are. One of my favorite tells how Ma'ii watched the Holy People carefully placing each of the stars in the night sky, creating patterns. Impatient with the slowness of the task, Ma'ii grabbed the blanket on which the stars were laying and threw all the remaining stars into the heavens in*

(Continued on page 11)

BEYOND PINK AND BLUE: AVOIDING GENDER STEREOTYPES

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Sex role stereotyping in the early childhood classroom often sneaks up on us. That is why programs must consciously plan to avoid it. The goal in many programs is to focus on androgynous (neither sex) activities. This can be difficult to accomplish. Diversity, on the other hand, accompanied by androgynous activities and language can be implemented into the early childhood program in many areas. Diversity is exposing children to as many sex role options as possible. Before we can implement diversity or androgyny into the program, we must first understand how and when children acquire their sex role identification.

All children pass through 5 stages of sex role identification. The age at which a child passes through a specific stage may vary while the order of stages remains constant. (Kostelnik, Stein, Whiren, Soderman).

Stage One:
Birth to 18 months - Learn general awareness of gender. By 8 months of age child differentiates self from other.

Stage Two:
18 months to 3 years - Gender identity. Biological identification as male or female.

Stage Three:
4 to 6 years - Children learn that boys always become men and girls always become women.

Stage Four:
Gender Constancy - Women are still female even when they are dressed as a man, etc.

Stage Five:
6 to 8 years - Children decide on behaviors or actions that are characteristic of a certain gender.

How can we implement diversity and androgynous into the program?

The first step is to have both male and female caregivers in the program. In that way we expose children to both genders in the roles of nurturer, leader and team member. Providers should try to acquire the most highly trained diversified staff possible.

Children's literature should also be diverse. Look for books that have females as main characters. Find books that show males and females accomplishing the same goals and working together. Don't include books, movies or films into the curriculum simply because they are labeled as classics. Often these are highly judgemental and stereotypical.

Other classroom materials should also display males and females in a variety of traditional and non-traditional roles. Felt board characters, dolls and puppets should be of both genders. At the same time, games which imply no gender should be in abundance throughout the room (unit blocks, playdough, etc.).

Visitors should also be as diversified as possible. That means going out of your way to find that female farmer, firefighter or doctor and male cashier or cook and teacher. These people are out there-- perhaps among the parents of the children in your care.

Pictures, posters and photographs that hang in the room can also reinforce the idea of diversity in sex roles.

(Continued on page 10)

GOING ONE STEP FURTHER-- NO TRADITIONAL HOLIDAYS

Bonnie Neugebauer

Consider, for a moment, the possibility that a child care program is an inappropriate place to celebrate holidays--period. Having thought about this issue at length in working with Francis Wardle, editing **Alike and Different**, and in life in and out of programs, I am coming to feel that this is so. Bear in mind that in my own program several years ago we put on a spectacular Thanksgiving feast complete with roasted chicken and Pilgrim hats, and one of my children attended a program that had a holiday-based curriculum (as soon as the refrigerator turkey started to fray, there would be a Christmas tree to take its place), and I love holidays, having been known to invent one now and then when the calendar proved inadequate. So this isn't a frivolous consideration--children love anticipation and planning and all the excitement that goes with festivity, and I love sharing all this with them.

There are at least three major problems with concentrating our time and energies on holiday celebrations:

1. It's extremely difficult to give holidays meaning that is developmentally appropriate for very young children. Most holidays are based on abstract concepts that are beyond their comprehension.

2. It's difficult to be inclusive. Are we going to celebrate holidays based on cultures represented in our program? What if there is little diversity? What if there is a great deal? What if some parents object to all holidays? Do we have the time and resources to do justice to them all? How much of our curriculum do we want to devote to holidays? What important activities are being displaced.

3. Many holidays are overdone anyway. Children see signs of the major commercialized holidays everywhere, so they'll be asking questions and their families will be making choices. (Suddenly I feel a pang of envy for people whose important religious and cultural holidays have not been discovered by Hallmark.) If families are celebrating, why do we need to celebrate too? Again, it's an issue of time, energy, resources, and educational objectives.

I'd like to suggest an alternative:

Let's use our creative gifts and celebratory spirit to make occasions that are the most developmentally appropriate for young children.

- Let's celebrate milestones--the first tooth, learning to whistle, printing name, moving from one age group to another, tying shoelaces, telling a story, making a friend.

- Let's celebrate points of learning--the number 3, worms, the color red, a favorite story, Thursday.

- Let's celebrate children and families--the birth of a sibling, a grandparent visit, moving to a new house. Children need this reinforcement that what happens at home is important at the center and vice versa.

- Let's celebrate events in the world (natural and unnatural)--a shuttle launch, the first snowflake, puddles, a thunderstorm, a presidential visit. Let's celebrate wonder.

When we make choices about what to celebrate, let us be very conscious of who we are doing it for. If we are doing it for ourselves it is very easy to choose a holiday curriculum--the resources are everywhere and excitement is built-in. If we are doing it for the families, we must choose carefully what to celebrate so that we are inclusive. If we are doing it for the children, let us be conscious of all the subtle messages inherent in what we do and choose things to celebrate that are meaningful, developmentally appropriate, and healthy for them.

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MAINSTREAMING *(Continued)*

Outdoor play areas are easily adaptable. Swings that hold wheelchairs can be hung from large sturdy swing sets. Some non-walking children can get around on riding toys. Raised sandboxes on legs are available so that wheelchairs can be pushed up to them, while other children stand at the side to play. Be sure to include grassy areas for your crawlers. Many good catalogs feature outdoor equipment redesigned for special needs children.

Open your doors to the wonderful experience of offering a mainstream child care facility. The rewards are numerous. All children make positive steps each day, and you have the satisfaction of helping parents know their children are learning life-lasting values of accepting others regardless of differences.

Infant / Toddler Certificate Offered at U of M

A Post Masters Certificate for persons who work with at-risk or handicapped infants and toddlers is now available at the University of Michigan. The new programs, which will begin in September, will cater to working students by offering workshops and practicums on weekends. For more information contact Larry Coppard at (313)-763-5979.

A Business Conference
for
Child Care Providers

Friday, Sept. 18 and Saturday, Sept. 19, 1992
MSU Management Education Center
Troy, Michigan

Register for one ($20.00)
or both days ($35.00)

for more information call Marilyn Rudzinski
Extension Home Economist
Conference Chair at (313) 469-6430.

BEYOND PINK AND BLUE: AVOIDING GENDER STEREOTYPES *(Continued)*

Words that adults use to describe the world around us should be as neutral as possible. The person in the fire truck is a firefighter. The person in the police car is a police officer. If you are unsure about gender, it is o.k. to call something "it". Try taping yourselves periodically. Listen to see if you are using "delicate" or "pretty" to describe girls or "tough" or "handsome" to describe boys. Something that may help caregivers diversify descriptive words is to pick "a word for the day". Write this word on your lesson plan so that there is a concrete reminder to you. Monday everything from hockey sticks to hair bows can be "handsome". Tuesday can be "colorful" and so on.

Songs we sing with young children can also diversify or reinforce sex role stereotypes. A teacher candidate was doing a participation in my classroom. She began by singing "Five Little Ducks Went Out To Play". Amazingly enough, the only parent these ducks would return for was Papa Duck. A very puzzled four year old asked why they wouldn't return when Mama Duck called. The candidate replied that the baby ducks just couldn't hear mama duck calling because her voice was so soft. The child responded that when her mother called her, she sure could hear it! The five little ducks could have been called home by a variety of relatives including mama, papa, brother, sister, uncle, or aunt or even baby, neighbor, and teacher.

In child care programs it is necessary to consciously and continually plan to avoid sex role stereotypes. What we put in their environment as well as our actions will have an effect on how children come to see themselves in masculine or feminine roles. It is our responsibility to use diverse materials, human and otherwise, to limit sex role stereotyping.

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RESOURCES

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Understanding the Multicultural Experience In Early Childhood Education, O.N. Saracho & B. Spodek, NAEYC

INTRODUCING CHILDREN TO NATIVE AMERICANS

(Continued)

random order. Then, finding one star remaining on the ground, he picked it up and placed it in the western sky for all to see. That red star--Mars--was from that day known as "Ma'ii so", Coyote's star.

6. *Teach children some words in Navajo: Ya'at'eeh ("Hello"; "Greetings"; literally, "It is good".) Hagoone' ("Goodbye"); 'Ahe'he (Thank you"); Shima ("My mother"); Shizhe'e ("My father"); Shi("Me"); mosi("cat"); leechaa'i("dog"); taala'i ("one"); naaki("two"); taa'("three"); dii'("four"); ashdla' ("five"); shash ("bear"); dibe ("sheep").*

7. *Teach children the round dance, using tapes of traditional Navajo "Squaw Dance" music, from the Enemyway ceremony. Children walk in linked-arm pairs around the perimeter of a large circle, moving toe-heel, toe-heel, toe-heel in rhythm to the music. Dancers may dip slightly at their knees while dancing.*

8. *Share picture books about Navajo life. Some nice ones include The Goat in the Rug (1980), by Charles L. Blood; Annie and the Old One (1971) by Miska Mimles; Tonibah and the Rainbow (1986) by Jack Crowder; Mystery of the Navajo Moon (1991) by Vee Browne.*

These are only a few of the many activities that could be done within the classroom to help children get the feel for one group of "real" Native Americans, the Navajo. Similar types of activities, specific to other native American groups, could be used to compare or contrast, or could relate to tribes that make Michigan (or the midwest) their home.

PROVIDER'S CORNER

PROTECT YOUR CHILD!

Sandra Settergren
Child Care Licensing Consultant
Washtenaw County

In my 16 years experience in licensing day care homes, the most common offenders in sexual abuse allegations have been teen and pre-teen boys who live in the home and have been inappropriately left in charge of the day care children. I am talking about young boys, ages 10 to 15. They are extremely curious and terrified of girls their own age.

Most day care providers think they have some understanding of the effects of sexual abuse on the victims, but few have stopped to contemplate the devastating effects that an allegation of sexual abuse against their own son can have on the day care family. If the allegation is true, it can destroy your livelihood, cause serious damage to your family and have long-lasting repercussions for your son.

Why did he do this? Will he be arrested? Will everyone in the neighborhood hear about this? Will he have problems at school? Will this affect his future relationships with women? Where can he find treatment which will cause him to accept responsibility for the harm he has done without destroying his self-esteem? These are very difficult and frightening questions.

The better question is, "How can I avoid all this?" It can be very difficult for mothers to recognize their young son's awakening sexual curiosity. He's still your little boy. Recognize this curiosity as a normal stage of life and don't put him in a situation where he can be tempted or falsely accused. The mere accusation of sexual abuse can shake your family in ways you have never even contemplated.

Don't leave your son in charge of the day care children! Ever! He's not an adult and he's not the person these parents hired to watch their children. They hired you. You are always required to provide appropriate adult supervision. Never leave your minor children in charge of day care children in your home at any time, including evenings and weekends.

Protect your child! Never put him in a position to be accused of sexual abuse! Both your day care children and your own children are too valuable for you to run such a risk.

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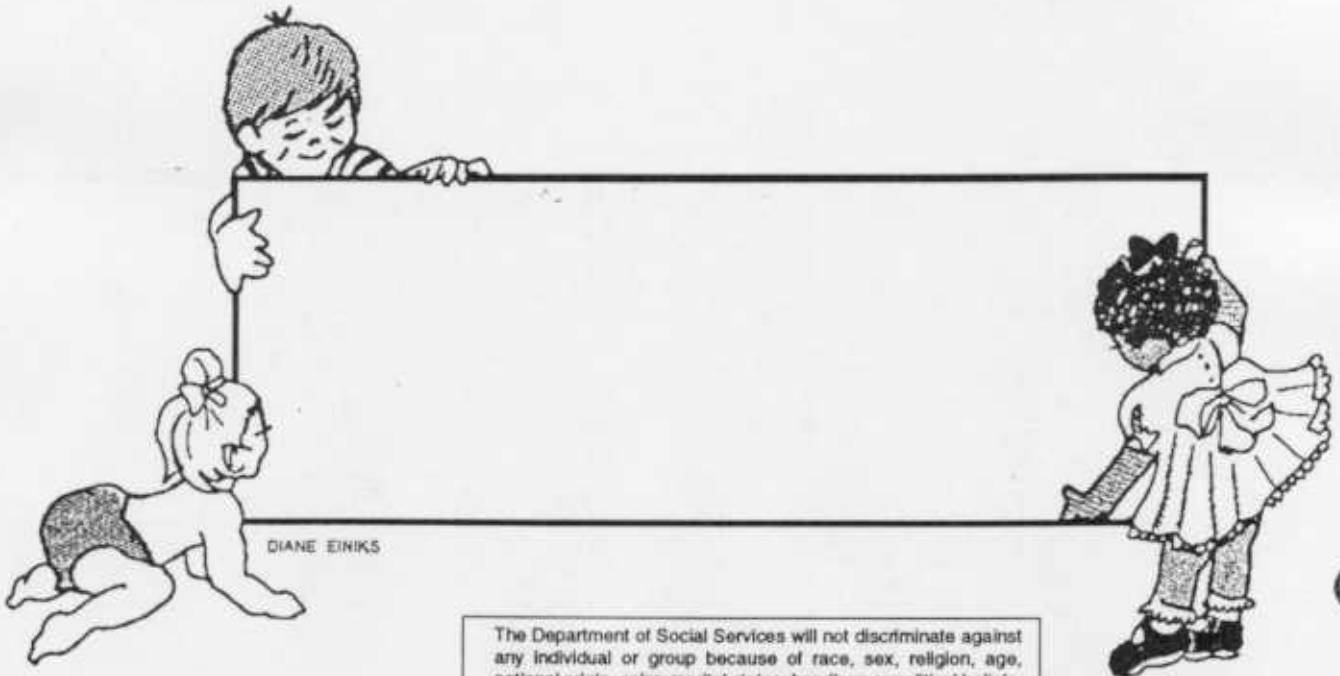

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